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*Courtesy New York Times*

MARBLE STATUE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE  
SIR MOSES EZEKIEL, SCULPTOR

*(See opposite page)*

## SPECIAL ARTICLES

### EDGAR ALLAN POE—SOME FACTS RECALLED

BY WILLIAM SARTAIN

(See opposite page)

THERE is no one in our literature who is so universally known and whose writings are so highly esteemed in Europe as Edgar Allan Poe. From my own experience in France I can vouch for the familiarity of all the French art students with his works. Next to Poe there was Nathaniel Hawthorne, who was admired especially for "The Scarlet Letter." As boys they had all read Fenimore Cooper's Indian tales also.

When I was in my sixth year my father's magazine *Sartain's Union Monthly* was in its last year, having been ruined by the defalcations of the business partner. It had a circulation three times as great as *Harper's Monthly* and was the foremost literary journal of America. Poe's last contribution to it was his "Annabel Lee," which was printed in January 1850, three months after his death, with an explanatory note that, although accepted and paid for, the delay in being printed had allowed it to be forestalled by three other publications, to which Poe, the note stated, had also sold it. But this was probably an error, for it appears that he gave a copy to one journal, and his editors, finding it among his effects, had it published in the *New York Tribune* where it first appeared.

I have a vague recollection of a visit that Poe made to my father's house only one month before his death—but more particularly of the many discussions of the latter event. He came there with his mind full of vague imaginings of conspiracies against him and dread of some impending calamity. After supper he was preparing to leave, and my father thought it wise to accompany him, because he was like one distraught, so nervous and unstrung was he. His shoes, being worn down at the heels, had chafed his feet, so he was made to wear my father's slippers. After some prolonged rambles in Fairmount Park his weird fancies became quieted down and they returned to our house, where Poe was lodged for the night on a sofa, my father sleeping on some chairs alongside of him without undressing. He remained in our house until the second day, when, restored to a normal condition, he left for New York, my father lending the money for the journey.

One month after that he was dead. He had arrived in Baltimore on his way from Richmond to New York and on alighting from the boat he was seen to turn down Pratt Street on the south side, followed by two suspicious looking characters as far as the southwest corner of Pratt and Light Streets. A fair presumption is that they got him into one of those abominable dens that line the wharf, drugged him and robbed him of everything. He was found in the morning lying unconscious on some boards placed over barrels and taken to the hospital,

where the wretched thin suit that had been exchanged for the clothes worn on his arrival was stripped from him, and he was put to bed. On the second day he died from the chill he suffered in that thin bombazine suit. Dr. J. J. Moran attested that he gave no sign whatever of liquor and that this story was a calumny—also that his death resulted from the chill that he had suffered on that cold October night.

I was an omnivorous reader at an early age and in the bound volumes of *Graham's Magazine* on our library shelves I had read Poe's "Murder in the Rue Morgue," "Descent into the Maelstrom" and other of his tales, hence the vivid impression made on my mind by these discussions of Poe's visit to our house. *Sartain's Magazine* had previously published his "Song of the Bells" (November 1849) of whose history I find some inaccurate account in his biographies. As first written, it had only eighteen lines, and though accepted and paid for, its publication was delayed some months, when Poe sent us an enlarged version of the poem and received additional payment. A month later he sent in another enlarged version—its final form as it was published—and he received an additional sum, making the total payment amount to forty-five dollars. It was printed in November—just after his death; but as the magazine was in press, no notice of that event appeared until the December issue.

As Sarah Hale has stated that Poe had been willing to write for fifty cents a page, this would seem to have been an almost generous payment for those days. He had received only ten dollars for "The Raven" in 1845. For his article on the "Poetic Principle" he had been paid thirty dollars. There is a letter, undated, to Carey and Lee his publishers, in which Poe says he wished them to continue as his publishers and to issue a book on the same terms as before—they to receive the profits and he to have twenty copies to distribute among his friends.

There seems to be good evidence that the construction of his poem "The Raven" or at least the idea of writing it resulted from his acquaintance, which was for a time intimate, with Henry B. Hirst, a Philadelphia poet of merit. Hirst owned a pet raven which Poe was quite familiar with. Before the publication of the poem the two poets quarreled and saw each other no more. As there is little doubt of some sort of collaboration of the two on the poem, it is probable that it was on this subject that they quarreled. Moreover the poem as first published was not signed by Poe's name but "Quarles," and that suggest that a "quarrel" had some connection with the composition. As to the old English poem of "Emblems" it has no relation to the verses or quarrels. The poem had an immediate

and remarkable success everywhere. I can well remember this Henry B. Hirst, who lived but a couple of city blocks away; frequently he dropped in at my father's office for some years after the magazine had been discontinued. He impressed me as a poetic figure; having some resemblance to the portraits of Shakespeare, his cultivation of this resemblance gave him a notable aspect that remains graven on my memory.

Poe was easily affected by a very slight dose of liquor, but he was far from indulging often. But he was of a nervous temperament, easily excited, and hence had many quarrels with his friends on slight causes. An old friend of mine, Mrs. Kelly, told me how he had quarreled with her parents because they had named her *Victorine Adèle* after a French aunt instead of *Lavinia* or *Leonore*, on which name he was very insistent. But he soon got over this and was a frequent visitor at their house as before. But his eccentricity often resulted in more serious estrangements, since his pride did not permit him to smooth over the affair. Yet he had a warm heart under his proud exterior as many anecdotes testified.

The "Song of the Bells" and "The Raven" being so connected with my early recollections, I would mention another of his writings that early fascinated me: "The Island of the Fay." It has been classed as a prose poem, and commences with an argument for the claim of natural scenery as even more capable of affording solitary enjoyment than does music. "In truth" he says "the man who would

behold aright the glory of God upon the earth must in solitude behold that glory." To me at least, the presence of, not human life only, but life in any other form than that of the green things that grow upon the soil and are voiceless, is a stain upon the landscape—is at war with the genius of the scene. I have lately been reminded of this by the statement of Jules Dupré that when he wanted to paint a picture appealing to the common crowd, a salable landscape or "pot boiler," he made it a point to introduce *ducks* into the composition!

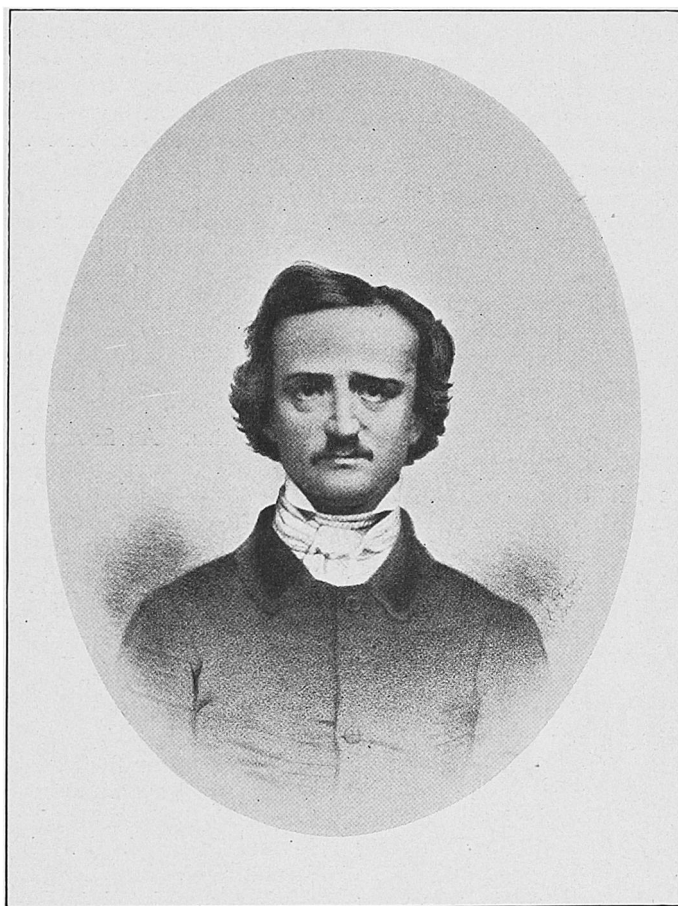
Poe was born in Boston January 19th, 1809. Poe no doubt inherited his eccentric nature. His father was of good family, but after being educated for the bar, became an actor and married an actress. When Poe was two years old, his parents died and he was

adopted by his godfather Edgar Allan, a wealthy merchant of Richmond, Virginia. From his eighth to his thirteenth year he was put to school in England. Thence he was removed to a school in Virginia and finally to the University at Charlottesville. As a student he was distinguished in his studies and also as an athlete; but after one year he left. Being too passionately fond of card games, he got deeply in debt, it is said, as much as for two thousand dollars. Some unexplained quarrel with his godfather—possibly about these debts—ensued. He was now eighteen years old, when he disappeared for two years and went to Europe to fight for the Greeks, so it is said. Reappearing in Richmond in

1829, he stayed at home for one year and then was entered as a cadet in the Military Academy at West Point. But his ambitions in literature led him to neglect his studies and he was discharged. No one knows what he did for the ensuing two years. In 1833 he reappears as the successful competitor for a story in a Baltimore newspaper, winning the hundred dollar prize. Thenceforth he subsisted by literature. His godfather had married again and had a child, and thereafter not one cent for Poe!

His biographer Griswold has slandered him as intemperate. My father said this was not true, and he was most temperate in drinking. It is a considerable confirmation of this, that Poe was a model of punctuality in his reviewing and other work for the magazines during all the ensuing fifteen years of his life, which comprises his literary career. In

1837 he moved to New York and after a year to Philadelphia, where his contributions were the mainstay of *Graham's Magazine*, for which he wrote some of his finest stories. For much of his literary career he was half-starving. His labor over his writings is shown, no doubt with some exaggeration however, in his article "The Philosophy of Composition" written shortly after the publication of "The Raven." In this essay he enunciates some of his articles of faith, such as: Beauty is the legitimate province of the poem; it is a pure and intense elevation of the soul, *not* of the intellect nor the heart. Leading up to the motive of his poem "The Raven" he carried his theory to the end, and adds that the tone of its highest manifestation is *sadness*. Death is the most melancholy: and Death when allied to



EDGAR ALLAN POE

FROM A LITHOGRAPH BY A. PERRASSIN, PARIS, AFTER A  
DAGUERRETYPE; A VERY CORRECT LIKENESS

Beauty is the supreme goal. The death of a beautiful woman is the most poetical topic, and the lips best suited for such purpose of those of a bereaved lover.

Poe married in 1836, when he was twenty-seven years old, his cousin Miss Clemm, who was only fourteen. After six years his wife—"a wife" he writes in 1842 "whom I loved as no man ever loved before, ruptured a blood vessel while singing. Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her forever and underwent all the agonies of death." Again and again, at varying intervals, the accident recurred. In all recurrences of the trouble he loved her more and more dearly. Constitutionally sensitive, he says he became insane at moments and in those moments drank. He says, of course his enemies refer the insanity to drink, rather than the drink to insanity. All this time his aunt Mrs. Clemm, his wife's mother, was his ministering angel. His wife died in January 1846, relieving him of a strain which, if continued, so he said, would have resulted in his permanent madness.

But except for these intermittent indulgences, his addiction to stimulants must have been grossly exaggerated by his biographer Griswold, whom my father has said he had personally seen on quite bad terms with Poe. My father's acquaintance with him was the more close in the latter years of his life and as his statements were most positive, these derogatory stories must be taken with a grain of salt. The account I have given of Poe's death, after having been robbed even of his clothes seems to me to be so reasonable—and moreover based on my father's contemporary information—that I can not accept the story of his having been lured into the hands of an electioneering gang and drugged, so as to be utilized for depositing ballots in numerous polling places. It would seem very doubtful that votes would be received from any one in his alleged condition. His death occurred on the 7th day of October 1849, in the forty-first year of his age. Such was the sad end of "life's fitful fever" for one whose writings are increasingly admired and who is universally acknowledged a great literary master.

*William Sartain*

## IS THERE SUBLIMITY IN JAPANESE ART?

BY JOHN LUTHER LONG

**W**HETHER a work of art contains the elements of sublimity depends entirely upon whether it evokes such emotions. And these, I suppose, must not be altogether the emotions of the creator of the work, or of his school or times or country, but of all the world at all times. But what thing in the art-work is most likely to induce the feeling which labels a work sublime? Mere bigness or even vastness is not always sublime. Often it is only rude. In short, what is sublimity in art?

In the West perhaps it is most often suggested by extent—the capacity in a thing for exacting awe. And it is precisely here that we must divest ourselves of everything but the Japanese point of view if we would find anything sublime in their art. I am not forgetful of what I have said in the preceding paragraph concerning the universality of artistic judgment. But we must reach that, if at all, by beginning in this instance with the very creators of the thing in question. For, I fancy, the sublimity of Japanese art consists in its perfection. I agree that, in a western mind, this is somewhat of a shock at first view. He is likely to consider the chasmic distance between the definition of Extent and of Perfection, and to dismiss the whole matter. And he may do so at this point if he thinks I have no case.

For it is entirely true that the Japanese care little for mere bigness without symmetry, form or color. Yet, while the appreciation of these things is often in their physical presentation, it is also often intellectual or compounded of both.

Every one is familiar with the fact, that, where an art object consists of a number of similar units, the Japanese will produce only one of them, leaving the impression of the whole to the mind.

Perhaps no loftier emotion is ever evoked in the Japanese mind than by the quiet contemplation of, let us say, a cherry-grove in full and perfect blos-

som. Here is no expression of extent or awe, no thrill, only pure and perfect beauty. A Japanese will spend enraptured days here, enamored of the perfection of the scene, the atmosphere, the color, the form and color of the blossoms. And he who never before indited a poem will be moved to do so here, couching it in the noblest phrases he knows, hanging it adoringly upon the branches of the trees which have inspired him. The Emperor himself is expected to do this when he visits Mukojima or Shiba. The perfection of the whole, and of each tiny petal as well, is sublime to the Japanese, and he had been transported for a brief space to the heavens where such completeness has its habitat. And if the contemplation of these perfect things has carried him to, let us say, the Twenty-Seventh Heaven, he has at least reached thereby the sublimest altitude human thought has yet achieved. It is questionable whether the thrills of awe we in the West associate with sublimity can do more.

Likewise a Japanese will stand for silent immovable hours on the edge of a motionless moat, water-full, in a perfect night with a full moon in an immaculate sky reflected on the still water. His feet, perhaps, will have been carefully bedded in irises. There will have been in the soft, moist air the aroma Japonica. Perfect stillness will have reigned over earth, air and sky. Impeccable perfection to him. And, again, he is likely to make a poem. They are little—their poems—something like this:

The moon up there  
The moon down here—  
Tontori, tontorori!

O is it sea or is it sky?  
The heavens or earth?—  
Gods, what care I?

Upon my breast your head,—  
You sigh—  
Tontori, tontorori!